

R E M A R K S

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9-12 and 14-16 are in the application, with Claims 1, 7, 9 and 11 having been amended, with Claims 3, 5, 8 and 13 having been cancelled, and with Claim 16 having been added. Claims 1, 9, 11 and 16 are the independent claims herein. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claim 9 has been amended to address the informalities noted in the Office Action. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter with respect to Claims 3, 5, 7-10 and 13. The amended independent claims herein now recite the allowable subject matter of one or more of these claims. Specifically, independent Claim 1 recites the subject matter of original Claim 3, and independent Claim 11 recites the subject matter of original Claim 13. Newly-added Claim 16 recites the subject matter of original Claim 7. Accordingly, each independent claim herein is believed to be allowable. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections are respectfully requested.

C O N C L U S I O N

The outstanding Office Action presents a number of characterizations regarding each of the applied references, some of which are not directly addressed herein because they are not related to the rejections of the independent claims. Applicants do not necessarily agree with the characterizations and reserve the right to further discuss those characterizations.

For at least the reasons given above, it is submitted that the entire application is in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience. Alternatively, if there remains any question regarding the present application or any of the cited references, or if the Examiner has any further suggestions for expediting allowance of the present application, the Examiner is cordially requested to contact the undersigned via telephone at (203) 972-0049.

Respectfully submitted,



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